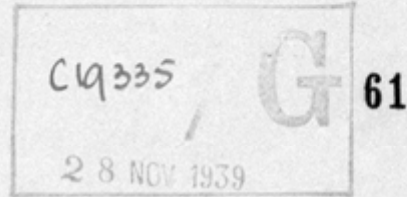


1939	WAR GERMANY Central	C19335 / G 60 28 NOV 1939
C 19335/4/19335/8  F.O. Minute (Sir A. Cadogan)  23rd November, 1939.	<u>Incident at Venloo</u>  Reports conversation with the French Ambassador regarding the incident at Venloo when Major Stevens and Mr. Best had been kidnapped by Gestapo agents.	
Last Paper.	(Minutes.)	
References.	? Record <del>privately</del> to Paris  n- felt J. Robert 30/11	
(Print.)		
(How disposed of.) Sir R. Campbell from Sir A. Cadogan #1. 12.		
(Action completed.)	(Index.)	
Next Paper.		



I asked the FRENCH AMBASSADOR to call this morning and in course of conversation I referred to the recent German statement which attempted to connect the Munich bomb outrage with the incident near Venloo. I said that it was of course unnecessary to observe that the Germans had not succeeded in establishing such a connexion which, of course, did not exist. Monsieur Corbin said that he did not suppose there was anybody outside Germany who believed the German statement.

In regard to the incident at Venloo I said that Monsieur Corbin would of course realise that this was the incident to which the Prime Minister had referred when he told Monsieur Daladier about the approach which we had had from what appeared to be military elements in Germany.

I told Monsieur Corbin that our information as to what actually happened was rather meagre. We had been told that Major Stevens had been shot dead, but the Germans now maintained that he was a prisoner in Germany.

Monsieur Corbin asked whether on the occasion of the incident German officers had crossed over into Holland. I told him that here again I could not answer with certainty as our information was not detailed, but I had understood from one report that two German officers had come over the frontier and that when Major Stevens and the others drove up, the Gestapo agents fell upon them and shot and kidnapped them.

Monsieur Corbin asked if we had anything to show that these two German officers were also attacked by the Gestapo or were acting in collusion with them. I said I could not

reply/



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reply definitely, but my impression had been that the report read as if they had also been attacked, but I could not say for certain.

Monsieur Corbin said that when the Prime Minister had told Monsieur Daladier the story, the point that struck him as rather curious was that after the incident we had apparently received through other channels a message which tended to show that the military with whom we were in contact were unaware of what had taken place at the frontier. It had occurred to him that the non-return of their emissaries from the frontier would have shown them immediately what had happened.

*ab.*23rd November, 1939.*H. 24. 11.**RV*

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C 19335/G.

1st December, 1939.

Secret.

Dear Ronnie,

You may be interested to know that in the course of conversation with Corbin on November 23rd I referred to the recent German statement which attempted to connect the Munich bomb outrage with the incident near Venloo. I said that it was of course unnecessary to observe that the Germans had not succeeded in establishing such a connexion which, of course, did not exist. Corbin said that he did not suppose there was anybody outside Germany who believed the German statement.

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His Excellency  
The Right Honourable  
Sir R.H. Campbell, K.C.M.G.



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The above is for your own information in case Monsieur Daladier should raise the question with you.

(sgd) A. Cadogan.



Sent November 16th.

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Draft Wireless Message from the Passport Control Officer  
at The Hague, to the German Generals.

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Message containing views of His Majesty's Government was sent from London on November 6th and should have been delivered verbally to your representatives by ours. It is possible that this was done, but in the circumstances we cannot be sure.

Gist of message was that there must be a restoration of confidence which has been destroyed by existing German régime and which could only be achieved from within by a change both of the régime and of the spirit behind it. We have never contemplated a Europe in which Germany will not play her due part as a great and respected nation, but we cannot face renewal of occurrences of past few years and new Government must inspire confidence if discussions are to be possible.

We should like further details of party and of proposals regarding the return of Germany to peaceful relations with the world. Also regarding the change over of Germany to a peace footing with object of achieving a "total peace". Daladier would have to be consulted before discussions.

Reference to royal personage not understood. Would he be officially associated with new Government?



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MOST SECRET.

Message received by wireless from German Generals  
in the evening of November 17.  
-----

"We thank you for views of His Majesty's Government  
received.

"Regret not to receive exact formulation, as in view  
of fresh circumstances text not known, but necessary in  
order arrive at final (? consultations).

"Our representative had orders to ascertain which  
personages nominated by London for conclusion consultations.

"How can Daladier be brought in for discussion in  
consultative form? Still see difficulties in him,  
especially on account of personage mentioned in connection  
with new Government."





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D R A F T.

Full text of original message would not add anything important to the gist telegraphed on November 16th.

Before we could consider any question of discussions, whether by nominated person or in any other way, we must have further information promised about the party and more precise details in regard to proposals.

There would be no need for Daladier to meet personage. If proposals appeared sufficiently satisfactory, we would consult with him: we do not anticipate difficulty there.

We should still like a reply to last two sentences of our message of November 16th.

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TELEGRAM from Passport Control Officer, The Hague.

D. 9.25. p.m. 30th Oct. 1939.

R. 11.40 p.m. 30th Oct. 1939.

URGENT.

\* \* \* \* \*

MOST SECRET.

Following declaration is sent at the request of German representatives. They further promise details of their Party in the near future. Am arranging to be in daily wireless communication with them, as frequent visits present great difficulty. Germans must leave here 0900 hours October 31st. Request that any comment in reply should reach me latest 0600 hours October 31st.

Declaration is as follows:-

A. WEHRMACHT has upper hand and although it is prepared to defend Germany, will not countenance a war of aggression.

B. WEHRMACHT is bound by oath to Hitler but has no similar engagement towards the Nazi Party.

C. WEHRMACHT feels strong enough to take a leading part in formation of a new Government but of the Nazi leaders would like GOERING only to be retained in office.

D. Of this Government Hitler would be the Constitutional head but by the influence of the WEHRMACHT would be decisive.

E. The object of the Government would be the return of Germany to peaceful friendly tranquil relations with the world and it would be sympathetic to a pan-European policy.

F. The change of Germany from a war to a peace footing is only possible with the full co-operation of all civilised countries/

countries and therefore the total peace which allays all religious, nationalist and ideological differences would be guaranteed.

G. Would H.M. Government be prepared in principle to enter into negotiations with the representative of one of the old Royal Houses (other than Hohenzollern or Hapsburg), or a person of similar standing.

H. Present military inactivity claimed by our friends to be due to their influence which they will continue to exercise pending further negotiations.

TELEGRAM from "C" to Passport Control Officer, The Hague.

D. 31st October, 1939.

No. 758.

\* \* \* \* \*

MOST SECRET.

A. Immediate considered reply impossible, but general impression given is that proposals make little advance whilst retention of Hitler might prove insuperable obstacle to any progress in negotiations.

B. Does WEHRMACHT plan envisage complete elimination of Party control with disappearance of ~~xxx~~ leading figures.

C. Proposed Royal contact hardly likely to appeal but with W/T facilities more considered reply will be sent.

D. Your verbal statement that there is difficulty in obtaining leave for personal contact appears inconsistent with your paragraph H.



879.

Received 3.10 p.m., 31.10.39.

Your 737 of October 31st.

- A. Following is submitted prior to despatch of your considered reply to German delegation:
- B. Following constituted German delegation:  
A Colonel from German General Staff, an official from Permanent Secretariat German Foreign Office, and the Officer who visited us before.  
They expressed inability at this stage to disclose further identities of the leaders of this movement, but admitted that Generals Wiedersheim and Rundstedt were members, and added, "and many more like them".
- C. Difficulty, if not impossibility, of accepting Hitler was fully emphasised by us. We are, however, inclined to believe that assertion by Germans that Hitler's initial presence would be indispensable if new Government is to command popular support, was made by them in all sincerity. They repeated that adequate guarantees against continuance of Dictatorial action would certainly be given.
- D. Suggestion regarding Royalty was made in effort to find individual from whom H.M.G. would be prepared to receive proposals for a settlement. Any alternative suggestion by H.M.G. would be welcomed by German delegation.
- E. Germans gave following picture of current efforts:  
The centre of influence is moving, under Papal and Italian patronage, to the Catholic South, which, with Austria, represents approximately half the population of Greater Germany. War has compelled Hitler to choose between Party and Wermacht.

He/

- 2 -

He has chosen latter, whereby influence over junior Officers and men is very great. Vermacht leaders, however, are strong enough to control him.

F. Our own impressions are:

- (1) Negotiations must be considered still as in preliminary stages. Each successive visit has been made by an administrative, authoritative person. Any definite acceptance or refusal of proposals would be as yet premature.
- (2) A genuine Peace Party in Catholic South Germany appears to be in a position materially to influence course of events, if encouraged by feeling that they have moral support of H.M.G.
- (3) German delegation appeared to realise that game is lost, and they are trying to start Peace negotiations with a minimum loss of prestige. Although we have not in any way gone beyond your precise instructions, we have, in this connection, adopted sympathetic attitude, because we have impression that, should H.M.G. decide to consider proposals and grant armistice for their examination, the Wermacht would almost certainly find it impossible to recommence hostilities, and Allied Governments would then be in a position to impose such terms as they deemed fit. (Foreign Office representative said frankly that Germany could survive Winter of inactivity, but would not be in a position to do much afterwards).

Ends.

MOST SECRET.

Message telegraphed at 7.15 p.m.  
November 3rd, 1939.

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"Matter being carefully considered. Hope send  
full message Monday or Tuesday covering points raised."

MOST SECRET.

Telegram

Despatched 3.50 p.m. 3rd November, 1939.

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"Request your views regarding person acceptable to H.M.G. to conduct further negotiations, and that you should indicate who will be representative of H.M.G. Time presses".

Have replied, "Your message sent on. Hope to send further information by wireless tomorrow".



Telegram  
from 'C' to his  
representative at  
The Hague.

In the event of the German representatives enquiring whether you have had a reply to the questions which you said at your last meeting you would refer to H.M.G., you should inform them as follows (not, however, handing them anything in writing):-

Whether Hitler remains in any capacity or not (but of course more particularly if he does remain) this country would have to see proof that German policy had changed direction.

But it is only fair to say that it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to convince people in this country that a change of régime in Germany, which left Hitler in office, was a genuine change.

In any case, not only would Germany have to right the wrongs done in Poland and Czechoslovakia, but she would also have to give pledges that there would be no repetition of acts of aggression.

It is difficult to see what pledge would be convincing short of a renunciation by Germany of her power to pursue the policy she has followed in recent years. There would have to be practical proposals for cooperation with other countries in the peaceful rebuilding and development of Europe and a reversal of the policy whereby German effort is devoted primarily to the maintenance of  
overwhelming ...

Does "pledges" mean  
"gages" - a security  
like a paper?

Physical or verbal?

overwhelming military strength.

Further than that - it is difficult to see how there could be mutual confidence and cooperation between England and Germany unless the latter abandoned her methods of religious and political persecution.

It is not for H.M.G. to say how these conditions could be met, but they are bound to say that, in their view, they are essential to the establishment of confidence on which alone peace could be solidly and durably based.

These questions have been put to us, and we can only answer them on our own behalf, but we have every reason to believe that the French Government would give a similar answer.

Neither France nor Great Britain, as the Prime Minister said, have any desire to carry on a vindictive war, but they are determined to prevent Germany continuing to make life in Europe unbearable.

Draft Wireless Message from the Passport Control  
Officer at The Hague to the German Generals.

Message containing views of His Majesty's Government was sent from London on November 6th and should have been delivered verbally to your representatives by ours. It is possible that this was done, but in the circumstances we cannot be sure.

Gist of message was that there must be a restoration of confidence which could only be achieved by a change both of the existing German régime and of the spirit behind it. If this were effected then we would be prepared to talk, but only after consultation with the French. In any case we do not contemplate a Europe in which Germany will not play her due part as a great and respected nation.

Consequently the next move is with you.

DRAFT STATEMENT.

The German Government are attempting to prove that His Majesty's Government are in some way involved in the recent attempt on Herr Hitler's life. To this end they allege that the Passport Control Officer at The Hague was recently in touch with dissident persons in Germany representing themselves to be hostile to the Nazi régime, but who were actually members of the Gestapo. In order to accomplish his fell design he is also alleged to have given these persons a wireless transmitting set. It is at once apparent therefore that, if the Passport Control Officer did in fact play any part in the attempted assassination of Herr Hitler it can only have been with the connivance of the Gestapo. Actually there is not a shred of evidence to connect Mr. Stevens with the Munich incident. Nor can there be, for the following very good reasons.

The facts are these. About the middle of October, the ill-fated Mr. Stevens was approached by certain German Officers who stated that they represented a group opposed to the Nazi régime and desirous of bringing about its downfall. They enquired whether, if this were accomplished, His Majesty's Government would be prepared to "negotiate". Naturally the Passport Control Officer passed on this communication; and though there were admittedly doubts as to its genuineness, it was thought better to give some general and guarded reply. One feature of this reply certainly was that the continued existence in office of the Nazis and

indeed ....



indeed of Herr Hitler himself, would render any negotiations on any point practically impossible.

It seems unlikely, however, that this message was ever actually delivered by Mr. Stevens, since on the afternoon of November 9th, while waiting for the intermediary at Venlo on the Dutch-German frontier, he and his companion, Mr. Payne-Best, were assaulted by Nazis and taken over the frontier. One report said that Mr. Stevens was shot dead. Seeing into whose hands he fell, it is perhaps unlucky if he were not. Our sympathies will go out to the wives of these two gallant officers, who were merely doing their best to keep in touch with what appeared to be an opposition to a totalitarian state.

It will have been made clear that His Majesty's Government deliberately gave no publicity to the incident at Venlo; partly because it was some time before the facts could be established, partly because it was not known to what extent the Gestapo would attempt to make capital out of this affair. Now, however, that Herr Himmler has chosen to fasten the blame for a plot obviously organised by Germans - and possibly by Germans serving in his own organisation - on to a totally innocent, British officer, it is time to let the truth be known.

MOST SECRET.

About the middle of October and agent of ours in Holland was approached on behalf of a number of highly-placed German Army officers, the names of some of these being given to us in confidence. One or two of them expressed a desire to come out into Holland to have a discussion with our agent.

The intermediaries who approached our agent claimed that those whom they represented were opposed to Herr Hitler and to his plans and that German military inactivity was due to their opposition.

Two officers arrived in Holland on October 23rd and were interviewed by our agent. They gave it to be understood that their principals were seeking to bring about a change of régime in Germany, but they maintained that Herr Hitler would have to be retained as nominal constitutional figurehead.

They were told in reply that it would be impossible to convince people in this country that a change of régime in Germany which left Hitler in office was a genuine change.

In any event Germany would have to right the wrongs done in Poland and Czechoslovakia and give pledges that there would be no repetition of acts of aggression and that there would be an end of religious and political persecution.

We made it clear that we were answering only on our own behalf, but that we had every reason to believe that the French Government would give a similar answer. Neither France nor Great Britain, as the Prime Minister had publicly said, had any desire to carry on a vindictive war, but they  
were/

-2-

were determined to prevent Germany continuing to make life in Europe unbearable.

On October 30th a reply was received to the effect that the Wehrmacht would not countenance war of aggression and felt strong enough to take a leading part in the formation of a new Government in Germany, but would like to retain Göring alone of the Nazi leaders in office. Of this Government Herr Hitler would be the constitutional head, but that influence of the Wehrmacht would be decisive. Without giving any detailed indication of proposals that might be made by such a new Government, they declared that its object would be the return of Germany to peaceful and friendly relations with the rest of the world and that it would be sympathetic to a pan-European policy. The change-over in Germany from a war to a peace footing would only be possible with the full co-operation of all countries and therefore a real peace allaying all religious, nationalist and ideological differences would have to be guaranteed.

Our agent in Holland was authorised on November 6th, should he make contact again with the German representatives, to inform them that the first requisite was the restoration of confidence which had been destroyed by Hitler and the Nazi régime. Recent events had created the universal feeling that the present régime could not be trusted. The prime necessity therefore was to change the régime and the spirit behind it: we could not risk a renewal of what had occurred in the last few years and any new Government in Germany must be able to inspire confidence if discussions were to be possible/



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possible. The Germans were to be warned that Monsieur Daladier would have to be consulted before any discussion could be opened.

It seems that German representatives, possibly including one of the Generals, crossed the frontier on November 10th and met our agent at the frontier. Unfortunately the party appears to have been killed or kidnapped by Germans who came over from the German side of the frontier, but it has been impossible to obtain precise details. It is not certain that the last message summarised above reached the German side.

<sup>same</sup> The ~~Germans~~ have <sup>however</sup> in the last few days contrived to get into touch with us through <sup>another</sup> ~~other~~ channels and the message <sup>has</sup> ~~been~~ repeated to them, ~~though we cannot be sure that it has reached its destination.~~

al.

16th November, 1939.



# SUMMARY OF EVENTS.

Contact with the "German Generals" (if indeed this is a correct description) seems to have been first established on October 17th by our Passport Control Officer in The Hague. Communication was at first conducted by telephone with Colonel Teichmann (said to be representing Generals Wiedersheim and Rundstedt). The Colonel said, briefly, that the Army were keen on peace and were defending themselves against the Gestapo; that they disapproved of Ribbentrop's policy; and that only a small push was needed to upset the Nazi régime.

2. On the following day the Passport Control Officer was told by his superiors that he could tell these intermediaries that a new situation would be created if their coup d'état succeeded; that the Allies had no desire to wage a vindictive war; and that the overthrow of the Nazi régime, real autonomy for the Czechs and the restoration of Poland probably represented the minimum terms of His Majesty's Government.
3. On October 20th we heard that the meeting had been postponed till October 21st since Wiedersheim had been summoned to Berlin. He had, however, requested (apparently by telephone) that we should not negotiate with either Ribbentrop or Goering but only with him.
4. On October 23rd we were informed that the General had not come in person to the meeting but had sent Colonel von Seydlitz and Colonel Teichmann. The latter had said that our terms were accepted as a basis for negotiations with Wiedersheim himself, who would "probably" come over on October 24th. Emphasis was laid on the desirability of retaining Hitler as a figure head and of our not negotiating with ....

with anybody else. The Passport Control Officer then delivered the message referred to in (2) above. A long and inconclusive discussion followed.

5. The sense of this discussion was conveyed to His Majesty's Government who authorised the despatch of a further message on October 25th. The text of this is given at Flag A.
6. On October 27th we learnt that General Wiedersheim was finally coming over on October 28th with "concrete proposals" and proposed to stay in The Hague for 24 hours. Again he did not do so; but on October 30th we heard that the German "delegation" had made a declaration and promised "details of their Party in the near future". This declaration was much more definite than the previous feelers. It is given at Flag B
7. In commenting on this declaration the Passport Control Officer said that "German delegates" consisted of a Colonel from the General Staff (presumably Teichmann), "an official from Permanent Secretariat German Foreign Office" and "Officer who visited us before". They would not disclose identity of leader of their movement but admitted that Wiedersheim and Rundstedt were members and added "and many more like them". Further the impressions of the Passport Control Officer were that the Germans "appeared to realise that the game was lost" and were trying "to start peace negotiations with minimum loss of prestige". If the Allies granted an armistice in these circumstances the Wehrmacht would not be able to begin hostilities again and the Allies could then dictate terms. It was at this meeting that the Passport Control Officer, with the approval of his Chief, handed to the Germans a wireless set and a cypher.

8. On November 3rd, having had no reply, the Germans wirelessly to the Passport Control Officer that they had "reached agreement on points raised and on reply received from London"(see paragraph 5 above). They <sup>requested</sup> regarded views of His Majesty's Government regarding persons acceptable to conduct negotiations.
9. The considered views of His Majesty's Government, which had been submitted to the War Cabinet for approval, were accordingly sent to The Hague on November 6th. They will be found at Flag C. Monsieur Corbin was informed of the main lines of this communication on the following day.
10. The message seems to have crossed one from The Hague despatched on November 7th, which stated that "Coup d'état will be definitely attempted, probably a week or ten days hence according to circumstances". General Wiedersheim, it went on to say, would "probably" meet our representatives on November 8th "to form personal opinion of our bona fides and to give further details". The last message we had from the Passport Control Officer was on November 9th by telephone. He then said that "the big man" had not been able to come on the previous day but was expected that afternoon. At 4 p.m. on November 9th (as we now know) he and his companion were ambushed at Venlo. Since then there has been no direct news of him. The bomb explosion at Munich took place at 9.10 p.m. on November 8th.
11. There followed a pause which lasted till November 13th. Late in the evening of that day the operator in The Hague picked up a message from the Generals which read as follows:-

"Two ....



"Two of our agents disappeared, presumably arrested, work rendered very difficult. When may we expect proposals of which you notified us? What news of you?"

To this Colloche Menzies replied (November 14th - 10 a.m.) "One of our representatives was foully murdered and the other kidnapped on the Dutch side of the frontier on Thursday evening. Have you any explanation? What happened to your delegates?"

In the evening of the same day the Germans replied as follows: "We must take into account the possibility of arrest.

No special measures have been observed as yet. It appears doubly necessary to enter into negotiations for which we still lack the agenda which it was stated would be sent. Nothing has been heard as yet of the kidnapping which was announced from there. We request further instructions without delay. We may come to an understanding".

As it seemed evident from this that they had not received our message of November 6th (see paragraph 9) a condensed version of it was sent by wireless ~~xxxx~~ on November 16th, and on November 17th the Prime Minister confided all the relevant facts to Monsieur Daladier.

12. In the evening of November 17th a final message was received from the Germans (see Flag D). Our proposed reply to this message was to have been submitted to the Cabinet for approval this morning.



SECRET.

In deciding what line to take up in regard to the German statement issued to the press last night we must bear in mind that there are certain unknown factors. The chief of these is the part played in the affair by the Gestapo. It is possible - though unlikely - that the latter were behind the advances of the "German Generals" from the start. Our representatives on the spot, who had long conferences with these Germans, were convinced that they were genuine, and our representatives were men of great experience with a profound knowledge of Germany and the Germans. The Chief of the S.I.S. also thought that they were genuine; and there are certain things to go on which were not in the possession of our people on the spot. We must therefore conclude that the balance of evidence shows that the "feelers" we received were not, originally at any rate, part of a plot organised by Herr Himmler. On the other hand, if we assume that it was - and perhaps is - still genuine, then it is clear that the Gestapo must have had wind of it before they framed the incident of November 9; and it is also clear that they must by this time have been able to extract by torture everything that one or both of our representatives knew. They have also possibly been able to obtain confessions from the two representatives of the German Generals. It is, therefore, legitimate to regard any communications from "the Generals" subsequent to November 9th as potentially bogus. On the other hand, the mention by the Germans last night of the fact that we had handed a wireless transmitter to "the Generals" may be based on a confession, and may not mean that they are either ...

either in possession of the set or aware of the actual identity of its possessor. All we know for certain is that they are attempting to link up our giving a wireless set to dissident Germans with the attempt on the life of the Führer.

Given these facts, and given those set forth in the attached memorandum, what should our present attitude be? It seems to me that, if we are not to fall between two stools, there are two broad alternatives. Either we should profess complete ignorance of the German allegations, and flatly deny ever having been in touch with any dissident Germans by wireless or other means, Or we should make a clean breast of the whole story, which after all contains nothing discreditable from our point of view.

Arguments in favour of the first course are (a) that, supposing that the Gestapo have not yet actually discovered the identity of the culprits, we might continue to shield them and after all achieve some coup d'état; (b) that it is no bad rule on principle to disavow all responsibility for Secret Service activities; (c) that nobody believes the Germans anyhow; and (d) that their muddled announcement contains self-contradictory statements. Against this must be set the fact (a) that we have already told the French that we were in touch with German Generals (though it is true that we never mentioned the wireless to the French, (b) that owing to the glaring indiscretions of Mrs. Stevens and Mrs. Best large numbers of private persons know all about the "negotiations" and the wireless, (c) that the Dutch Government apparently knew all about the activities of the Passport Control Officer long ago; (d) that we have already forbidden the Press here to ....

to make any mention of the incident at Venlo.

In favour of the second course it may well be that, in such matters honesty is the best policy, and that an account of what actually happened would heighten the existing impression that all is not well in Germany. Further, that if a circumstantial account were published by His Majesty's Government it would diminish any slight suspicion that we were after all somehow connected with the Munich bomb incident. Finally it can hardly be imagined that, if we stated publicly that has already no doubt been forcibly extracted from the unfortunate Stevens we should endanger any possible Monarchist plotters more than is already the case. On the other hand it may conceivably be that the Gestapo are waiting for us to confess that we were in touch, before November 8th, with what we imagined to be dissident Germans, in order to be able to say "That proves that Great Britain planted the bomb". Not that this would carry great conviction if by their own showing the coup was planned months ago in Switzerland<sup>7</sup>.

I confess that, as a choice of evils, the second course seems on the whole the better to me; and in the hope that His Majesty's Government will adopt it, or something like it, I submit a draft statement which might be issued to the Press.



DRAFT STATEMENT.

The German Government are attempting to prove that H.M. Government are in some way involved in the recent attempt on Herr Hitler's life. To this end they <sup>the P.P. ~~alleged~~ <sup>to</sup> connect</sup> ~~alleged that a~~ <sup>the Munich incident with a story about</sup> British official at The Hague was recently in touch with certain dissidents in Germany who represented themselves to be hostile to the Nazi régime, <sup>as they allege,</sup> but who, ~~actually~~ were members of the Gestapo. This allegation is, of course, precisely what was to be expected by any who have studied German technique. It will be remembered that in Mein Kampf Herr Hitler stated his conviction that "..... the bigger and simpler the lie, the more readily believed". In the present state of discontent in Germany it is not necessary to look outside the Reich for the origin of any such attempt.

On Herr Himmler's own story, it would appear that if in fact a British official had

played/



played any part in the attempted assassination of Herr Hitler, it can only have been with the knowledge of the Gestapo. That some members of the Gestapo were in fact connected with the Munich attempt, there is good grounds for believing; but there is not a shred of evidence to connect the British official in question with the Munich attempt, nor in fact was he even remotely connected with <sup>that</sup> those events.

It is now possible to make public what, so far as the British official in question is concerned, had been the sequence of events which led up to the recent incident <sup>near</sup> at Venlo on the Dutch frontier. About the middle of October a British official was approached by certain German elements connected with the Army who stated that they represented a

group/

group opposed to the Nazi régime, and desirous of bringing about its downfall. They enquired whether if this could be accomplished, H.M. Government would be "prepared to negotiate". The official in question naturally passed this communication to H.M. Government who, feeling that there might <sup>well</sup> ~~still~~ be doubt as to the genuineness of the communication, instructed the official to make further enquiries to test the bona fides of those <sup>through</sup> ~~to~~ whom the communication had been made. It was the more necessary to do this in as much as, if the communication was genuine, it confirmed - what was already well known to H.M. Government - the existence of wide-spread discontent in military and police circles. It was for the purpose of delivering such a message that the official was proceeding to the Dutch frontier when he and his companion were assaulted and kidnapped by

Nazis/

Nazis on the frontier. One report said

that the official was shot dead, but

*the present statement is*

~~recently~~ the German Government cast some

doubts on this report.

H.M. Government deliberately gave no

publicity to the incident at Venloo, partly

because it was some time before the facts

could be established and, while the facts

were still obscure, it was desired to avoid

causing any possible embarrassment to the

*Netherlands*

Dutch Government. It was also naturally

to be expected that the Gestapo would

attempt to make, as they have done, capital

out of the affair. Now, however, that Herr

Himmler seeks to fasten on H.M. Government

and a British officer the blame for a plot

obviously organised by Germans - and very

possibly ~~a~~ German serving in his own organisa-

tion - it is time to let the truth be known.